



The President's Daily Brief

October 11, 1975

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LEBANON

Prime Minister Karami reportedly has gotten the acquiescence of Syrian President Asad and leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization to a plan to [] impose a cease-fire in Beirut. The plan also calls for Palestinian forces to withdraw from Muslim areas of the city in order to avoid an army-fedayeen clash.

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President Franjiyah and Interior Minister Shamun, both Christians, [] pledged to support his peace plan and would not tolerate violations of the cease-fire by Christian Phalangists. Asad [] agreed to the plan, provided Yasir Arafat went along with it. Arafat [] was scheduled to meet with other Palestinian leaders [] to get their agreement.

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[] Palestinian forces are more in evidence in a peace-keeping role. In addition, a flurry of political activity has led to widespread expectation in the capital that more effective action is being taken to end the fighting.

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however [] the fighting will not end unless some fundamental changes are made in Lebanon's current political balance that would give the now politically favored, but outnumbered, Christians a lesser role. Radical leftists among the Muslims appear determined to continue the fighting; responsible Muslims are attempting to control them, but at the same time cannot allow the leftists to be crushed. Inevitably, even the [] Muslims will be drawn into supporting the leftists if the Christians continue to refuse to make political concessions.

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The Phalangists remain intransigent, fearing that concessions will lead to their political demise. []

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[] Many Christians also believe that the US and other Western powers will come to their rescue no matter how far they push the situation.

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LEBANON

We present below the major judgments of an Interagency Memorandum on Lebanon.

--The spiraling cycle of violence in Lebanon has thrown the country's traditional political system seriously out of balance and has brought Lebanon the nearest it has been to national collapse.

--The need for fundamental changes in the 1943 National Covenant, which provides for a distribution of political posts that favors the Christians over the country's Muslim majority, is the central issue in the crisis. Whether the country drifts further into chaos depends primarily on some immediate concessions by the Christian leadership to the moderate Muslims' demands for greater political power, and a scaling down of leftist reform proposals.

--The principal stumbling blocks to a workable compromise appear to be the continued intransigence of the Muslim extreme leftists and the Christian Phalangist leader Pierre Jumayyil. The extreme leftists, abetted by the more radical Palestinian fedayeen "rejectionists," are seeking to overturn the political system through violence and see little reason to stop now. Jumayyil, on the other hand, is seeking to preserve the status quo and is making it difficult for the old-line Muslim and Christian leaders to cooperate by his refusal to discuss any changes in the 1943 Covenant.

--If the so-called Committee for a National Dialogue fails to reconcile soon some of the competing demands of Muslims and Christians, and the extremist groups are not curbed, the situation is likely to disintegrate into even more widespread violence leading to all-out civil war.

--Prolonged civil strife carries a high risk of military intervention by Syria and Israel, and the possible dismemberment of the country.

--Thus far, Israel has reacted with restraint, and Syria, along with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat, has attempted to play an active mediating role. No major Lebanese Christian or Muslim leader appears deliberately bent on provoking Syrian or Israeli intervention, and no leader is actively seeking partition of the country.

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--A return to public order in the short term is dependent largely on the ability of Syria and the less radical fedayeen organizations to curb the small but dangerous extremist groups, restraint by Jumayyil's Phalangist militia, and the curbing of arms supplies to both Muslims and Christians.

--A joint Arab military force reportedly has been proposed by moderate Lebanese Christian and Muslim leaders to enforce a truce while a political compromise is negotiated. Such a force will be difficult to organize and deploy very soon and the effectiveness of such a force, if it materialized, would be questionable.

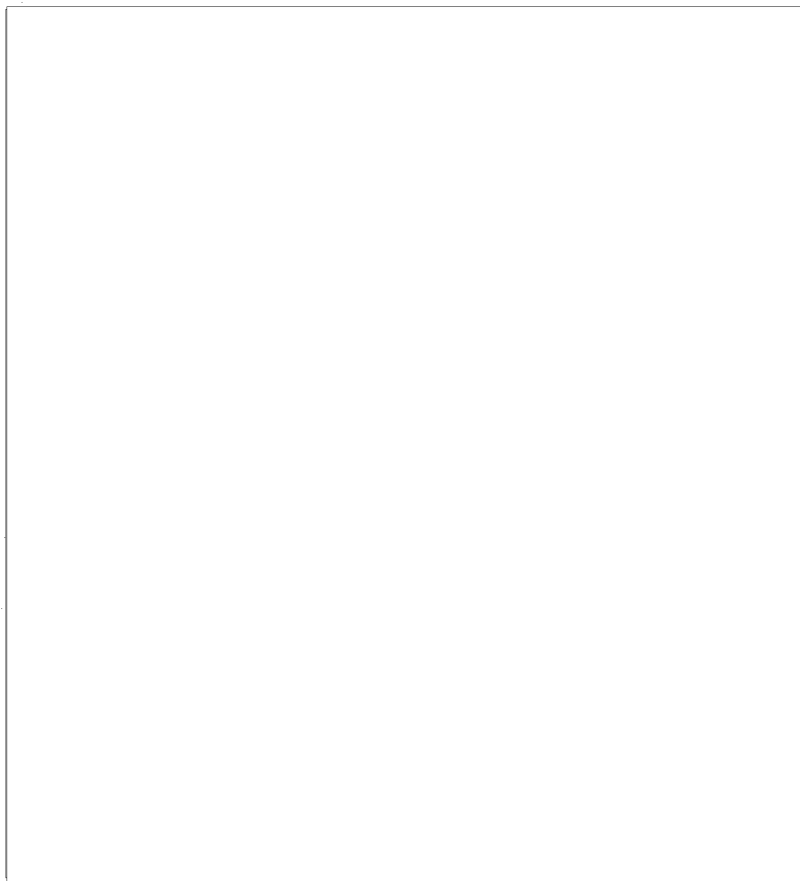
--A sense of national self-interest may overcome divisive forces, as it has in past Lebanese crises, but Lebanon is clearly at a crossroads. In the short term, the Muslims probably will not curb their demands for basic modifications in the Covenant, and the Christians may not agree to compromise under the duress of continued fighting.

--Even if compromise is achieved, the prospect for any quick return to stability is bleak. The government has shown no ability to exercise effective authority during the current crisis or to utilize the army to provide basic security. The communal tensions that have been inflamed over the past six months will not easily subside. Over the longer term, a more ideological division may develop within the country as moderate Christians and Muslims gravitate toward their more militant co-religionists.

--The Soviet Union has been attentive to the turmoil in Lebanon, but apparently has not tried to exacerbate it. As the divisions sharpen, the Soviets will be compelled to increase their assistance to the left and press the moderates for concessions. In the event of full civil war, or Syrian and Israeli intervention, Moscow probably would try to match any US role in dealing with the crisis, supporting Syria and the leftists and seeking to expose Sadat and moderate Arabs as insufficiently militant. However, we do not believe this would extend to direct Soviet intervention so long as the affair was restricted to Lebanon.

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PORTUGAL

Government leaders continue their tough public line against leftist-inspired disorders and military indiscipline, but so far they have taken no decisive action.

A joint meeting of the cabinet and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council was under way most of yesterday. The session, called by the cabinet to work out measures to restore order, has apparently not yet ended.

In its statement on Thursday calling for the joint meeting, the cabinet did announce the replacement of the leftist officials who had been in control of the Bank of Portugal. This is a vital step toward adoption of more realistic economic policies and a clear sign that Prime Minister Azevedo is still intent on reducing Communist influence in the government.

The military mutiny in Porto continues, and some 150 radical military policemen are said to have gone there to reinforce the dissident troops.

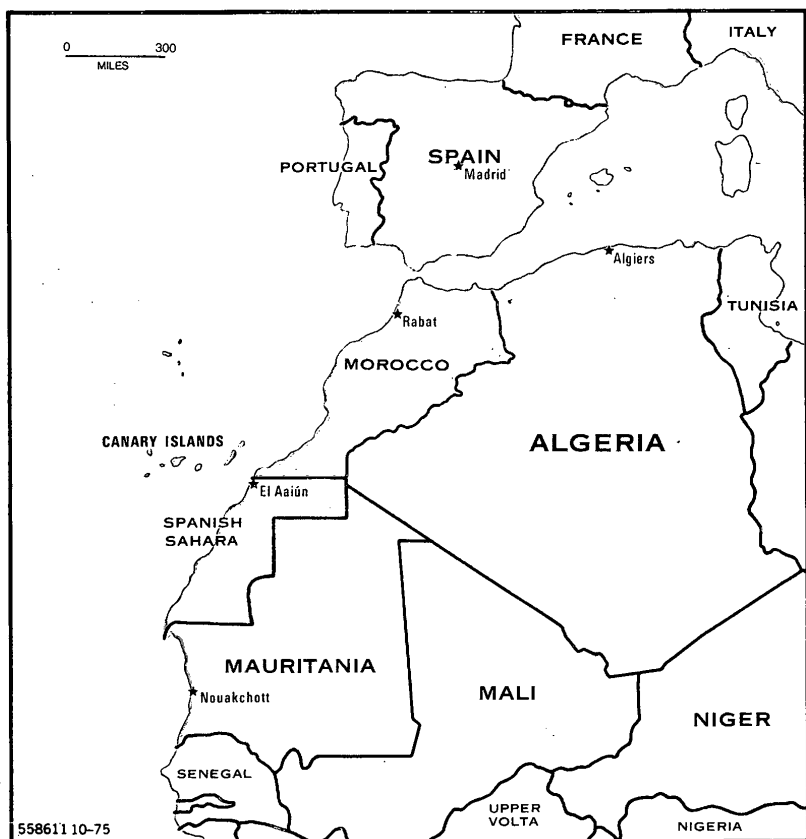


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There are some signs that the government is moving ahead in assembling the military intervention force it announced two weeks ago. Loyalist commandos are to form the backbone of the new force, which may ultimately grow to four battalions of 400 men each. Such a force could be a major help in restoring the government's authority.

The leader of the Popular Democratic Party, one of the two anti-Communist parties in the government, called on President Costa Gomes yesterday to give up his post as armed forces chief of staff. He said such a move would aid the government's effort to restore order. The President has been criticized by some anti-Communists for indecisiveness during the present turmoil, and the party leader presumably shares this view.



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NOTES

Morocco recalled about 10,000 reservists to active duty on October 7 in order to bolster its logistic capabilities in the southern part of the country.

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A claim by a US grain company yesterday that the USSR has already bought close to the 30 million metric tons of grain it needs to cover this year's drought-caused shortfall is in substantial error.

The claim is consistent with the Soviet effort to minimize the seriousness of this year's production shortfall. Even with purchases this week of about 1 million tons of grain from Australia and Canada, total purchases to date do not exceed 22.5 million tons. Total Soviet needs this year exceed expected production of 155 to 165 million tons by at least 60 million tons.

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The West German government has decided to accept 3,000 Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees now in reception camps in the US and Guam.

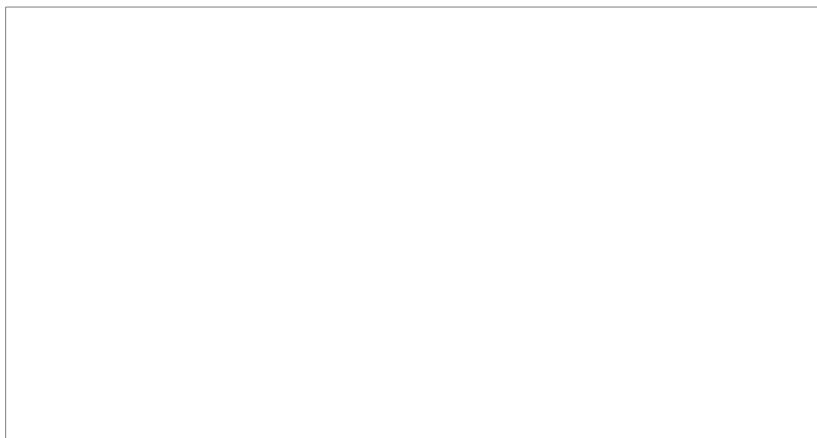
The Minister-President of Baden-Wuerttemberg, when he announced this decision on October 8, implied that Bonn was acting in response to urgent requests from the US. The West Germans heretofore have accepted only a handful of refugees.

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West German officials are apprehensive that the Soviet - East German treaty signed this week has ominous implications for West Berlin.

The major concern is with article seven of the treaty, which they say distorts the language of the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971 to give the impression that East German and Soviet relations with West Berlin are on the same footing as those between West Germany and that city. We see no indications that the treaty presages a new Soviet - East German pressure campaign against West Berlin. Bonn, however, believes that Pankow and Moscow will increasingly try to bypass the Federal Republic and deal directly with the West Berlin authorities. Both have long attempted to reduce Bonn's influence in West Berlin, while enlarging their role in order to increase the city's dependence on them.

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Chiang Ching, the wife of China's Mao Tse-tung, has suffered a series of setbacks this year that have virtually stripped her of the power she had wielded over cultural matters for nearly a decade.

Her misfortunes raise serious doubts about her present and future role in politics. Significantly, Mao has been personally associated with the moves against his wife. It is now widely accepted in China that he has all but washed his hands of her. This deprives her of a powerful weapon she had used effectively in the past and could have been expected to use after Mao's death; namely, that opposition to her is tantamount to opposition to Mao, that she is the sole repository of Mao Tse-tung's thought, and that others in the leadership distort Mao's policies.

* * *

A sizable force of Cuban troops recently arrived in Angola to assist the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola.

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The troops may be used in a noncombat role to free local troops to take part in the Popular Movement's current drive on Nova Lisboa, the headquarters of the rival National Union for the Total Independence of Angola. Cuba has provided assistance to the Popular Movement for at least the past ten years, primarily in the form of training and technical assistance in Cuba and in Congo. A few Cuban technical advisers have been operating with the Popular Movement inside Angola for some time.

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